

City Centre Framework - BWA Response to March 2018 Consultation

Summary

Bristol Walking Alliance welcomes the CCF as far as it goes, but the movement framework proposals could have been so much better. It lacks ambition and is a missed opportunity.

We believe the CCF, **especially in its movement framework**, should aim to make the environment better for people on foot. In particular, we suggest it should have the following specific goals:

- more people walking into the centre from the surrounding areas;
- easier to get from one part of the centre to another on foot;
- differentiation between 'travel' routes and 'leisure' spaces;
- guaranteed accessible routes (e.g. adequate width, lack of obstructions, level surfaces);
- fewer places where walking is compromised by other transport modes.

When using the terms 'on foot' or 'walking', we include those who have to use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or mobility scooters, as well as those who have limited walking range or limited visual or hearing abilities.

In the following sections, we outline the problems with the current consultation document and set out our proposals for what should be included in order to address the above goals.

Problems with the current consultation document

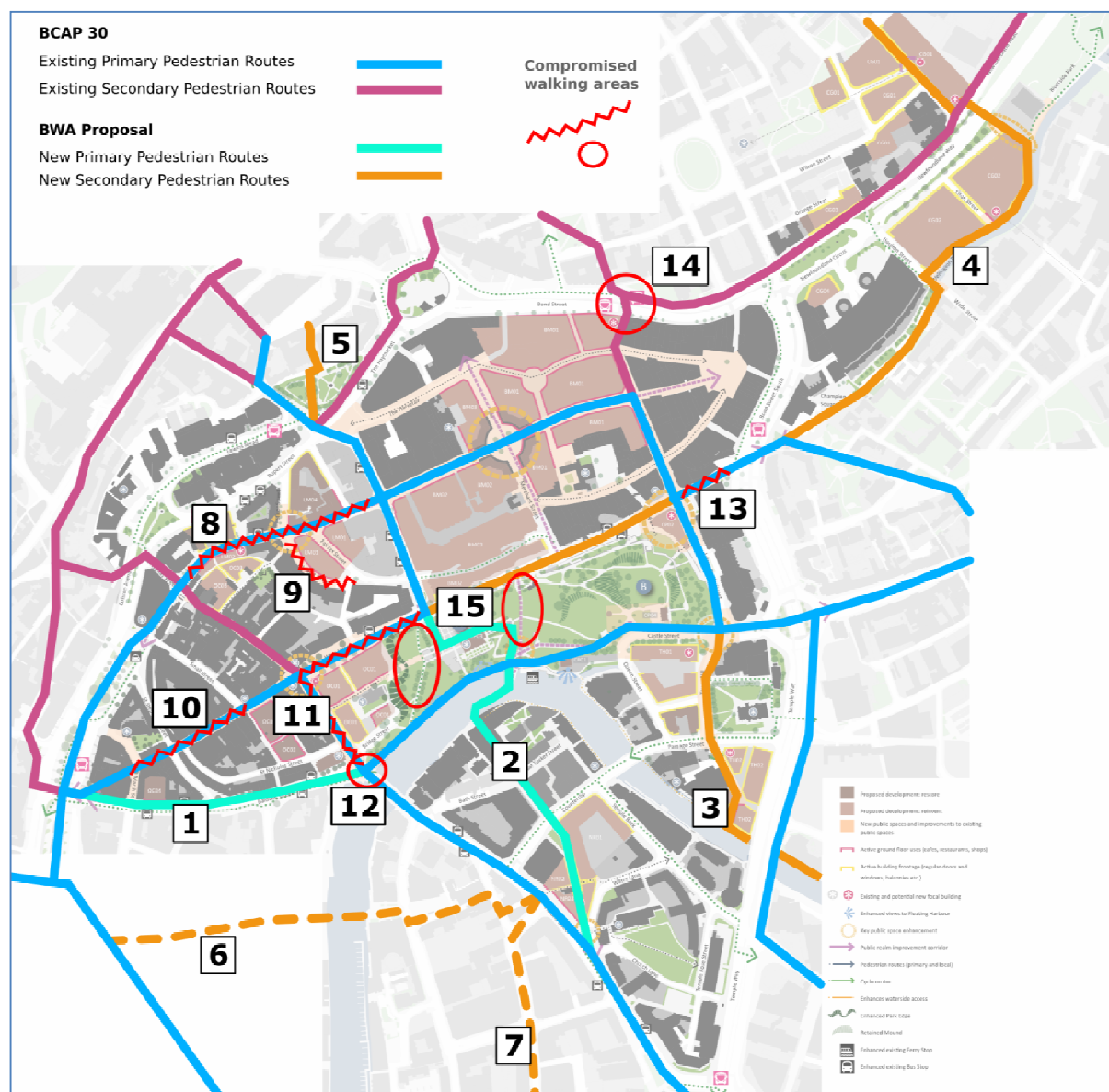
- It does not recognise the primacy of making the environment better for people on foot. It fails to show a network of walking routes.
- It fails to consider movements by the various modes *into* the area. It does not assess the adverse impact of motor traffic coming into the area. It does not assess how to improve the routes into the city centre for the high number of people who walk to work.
- It ducks movement issues rather than facing up to them. It defers addressing car parking until a parking strategy yet to be produced. It promotes bus lanes and cycle lanes without facing up to the issue of reallocating road space.
- It fails to propose specific schemes in certain places to change the balance of road space use.
- It lists aspirations, without any discussion of how they might be delivered, except to refer to public funding and developer contributions. No timescale is given for improvements.

The Department for Transport "Manual for Streets" (Table 3.2) sets out the approach we advocate of applying a user hierarchy, where pedestrians are considered first in the design process.

Map showing our specific proposals

This map, based on the combined subarea maps shown in the consultation documents, gives an overview of our proposals.

Numbers on the map refer to the descriptions given in the following sections.



Walking routes

The Bristol Central Area Plan of March 2015 (part of the current Bristol Local Plan) sets out in Policy BCAP30 a set of existing and proposed primary and secondary pedestrian routes. In particular, it says that *"Development on or adjacent to primary and secondary pedestrian routes will be expected to provide an appropriate and proportionate level of public realm improvements to the route. Development that would be harmful to the amenity or accessibility of primary or secondary pedestrian routes will not be permitted."*

As well as the CCF explicitly acknowledging the existing pedestrian priority routes set out in BCAP30, we believe BCAP30 is a good starting point for defining further routes to allow:

- walking into the centre from surrounding areas, and
- making it easier to get from one part of the centre to another on foot.

In particular, there are the following additions to the BCAP30 routes that we would recommend.

1 **Additional Primary Route** - Along Baldwin Street from the Centre to Bristol Bridge

2 **Additional Primary Route** - From the south end of Union Street, across Castle Park (avoiding steps), over Castle Bridge, through Finzels Reach and following the line of the proposed Temple Street Pedestrian Priority Area. (This was included as a **proposed secondary pedestrian route** in BCAP30).

3 **Additional Secondary Route** - From Castle Street, along Tower Hill, then down to the floating harbour with a walkway alongside the waterway under Temple Way to link to Temple Meads via Valentine Bridge. In the CCF consultation document, this is shown as a focus for new cycle route improvements. However, there are also more direct cycle routes shown along Temple Way and along Temple Back to Temple Meads Station, so we believe the riverside should be dedicated as a route for pedestrians.

4 **Additional Secondary Route** - Along Broad Weir then following the line of public realm investment shown in the CCF through St Judes.

5 **Additional Secondary Route** - Through St James' Park to the Bus Station.

6 Though not directly in the CCF area, BCAP30 includes a **proposed secondary pedestrian route** along King Street, with a new pedestrian crossing of the floating harbour to connect to Victoria Street via Thomas Lane. The ambition for this future pedestrian route should be included in the CCF.

7 To provide access to the CCF area from the south, we believe a new **secondary pedestrian route** should be added through the Redcliffe area along the line of St Thomas Street.

Leisure spaces

It is important that the walking environment is not only about getting from one place to another. Development should also be about creating spaces that people wish to walk to and to rest in. The CCF should therefore provide:

- differentiation between 'travel' routes and 'leisure' spaces.

There are already several green spaces in the CCF area, such as Castle Park, which are well used by those on foot for leisure. We believe it is important that such spaces should be preserved and enhanced, and new 'pocket parks' should be added where possible alongside new developments. This should include planting of new trees to help create a better urban environment - there is no mention at all of such an important aspect of the cityscape in the consultation document.

The CCF consultation document says that *“Public Art is a key component of Bristol City Council’s vision for the development of high quality places and urban design.”* Public art has its place, but practicalities like benches and informal seating may be more important in some settings.

Accessible routes

To guide development, there should be minimum acceptable standards for the walking environment to provide:

- guaranteed accessible routes.

Based on the designation of primary and secondary pedestrian routes, as set out in BCAP30 and enhanced by our proposals above, and by the Pedestrian Priority Areas identified in the CCF, we suggest the following.

For **Primary Pedestrian Routes** and **Pedestrian Priority Areas**:

- minimum unobstructed **footway width 3m**
- removal of unnecessary footway obstructions
- continuous pavements, including crossings of side roads **at footway level** with pedestrian priority
- crossings of main roads with wide zebra crossings or pedestrian priority lights-controlled crossings

For **Secondary Pedestrian Routes**:

- minimum unobstructed **footway width 2m**
- removal of unnecessary footway obstructions
- crossings of main roads with zebra or lights-controlled crossings

To achieve these minimum standards, it should be acknowledged that road space may need to be reallocated in places. Reduction of on-street parking is one option, or removal of motor traffic except for deliveries is another. This also makes it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to share the available space without interference.

Places where walking is compromised

The CCF document identifies some places, particularly junctions, where public space enhancements are required. We would add the following as of equal importance, where walking is compromised by other transport modes.

8 Nelson Street. Despite recent changes and planned modifications, Nelson Street is not a satisfactory walking route and the Council should acknowledge that. Current plans are for channelling more buses along this narrow road, requiring significant road width for them to pass each other. This is compromising the space for both pedestrians and cyclists.

9 All Saints Street. The pedestrian environment is poor here also, partly because of vehicles trying to access the All Saints Street and Galleries car parks, or circling to find on-street parking places. We suggest the All Saints Street car park should be identified for future redevelopment involving some alternative use.

10 Corn Street and Clare Street. The opportunity should be taken to fully pedestrianise Corn Street and Clare Street, at a single level, and to remove all parking except for deliveries outside peak hours.

11 High Street and Wine Street. The opportunity should be taken to restrict these roads to local access and bus only. This would enable the road space to be reduced, and make for easier pedestrian connection across to Castle Park and the active ground floor developments proposed on the corner of these two streets.

12 Bristol Bridge junction with Baldwin Street/High Street. The footways around this junction are very busy at peak times, and are inadequate for the amount of footfall. If traffic to and from High Street were limited, it would be possible to create a wider single-stage pedestrian crossing from the footway on the north side of Baldwin Street across to Castle Park, so relieving the congestion on the south side near the cycle lane.

13 Route beside Castlemead. There is the potential for this space to be compromised by trying to fit a bus lane alongside pedestrian and cycle routes.

14 Crossing of Bond Street. As a key entry/exit point into the CCF area from the north, this crossing must not be compromised by the Callowhill Court development and its alignment and pedestrian responsiveness could be improved.

A further general observation is that **combining pedestrian and cycling routes is to be avoided**, especially in high-volume areas (which would include most of the routes in the city centre), unless there is sufficient space for proper segregation.

15 Across Castle Park. There is the potential for this leisure space to be compromised by fitting in more cycle routes that have to be shared with pedestrians, especially north-south across the park.

Conclusion

We hope that the next version of the CCF will include proper consideration of walking.

We would expect it to include a map showing walking routes, as promised but remarkably omitted in the current consultation document. Our proposals should go some way towards making it possible to define future walking routes that should be constructed to adequate standards when nearby development allows.

Bristol Walking Alliance

14 May 2018